

54  
Phthisis Pulmonalis

#6

Isaac Pipkin  
aged 26 years  
suffering from  
disease of the lungs  
admitted March 26th 1821

Isaac Pipkin

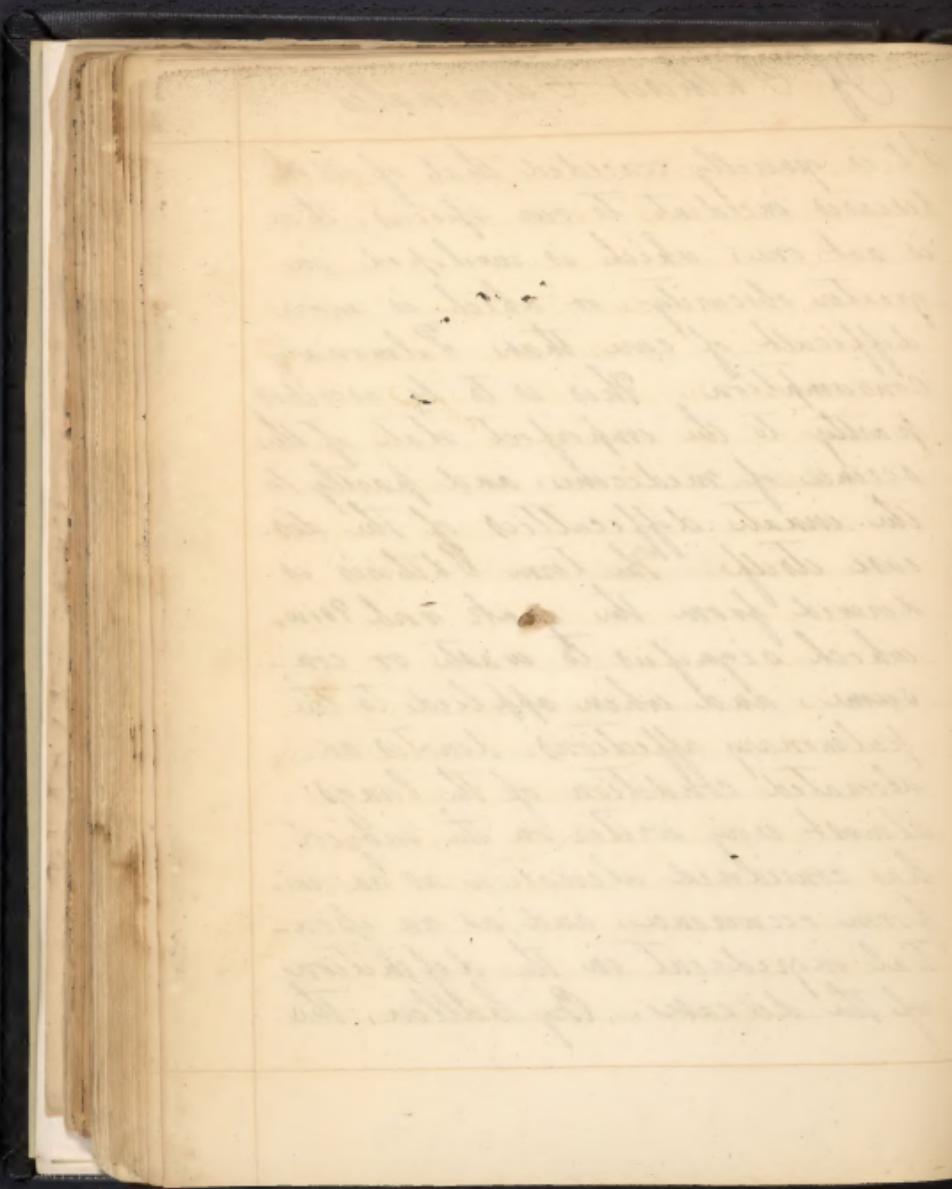
admitted March 26th 1821

1888. 10. 26. 10. 10. 10.

1888. 10. 26. 10. 10. 10.

## Of Phthisis Pulmonalis

It is generally conceded that of all the diseases incident to our species, there is not one; which is enveloped in greater obscurity, or which is more difficult of cure, than Pulmonary Consumption. This is to be ascribed partly to the imperfect state of the science of medicine, and partly to the innate difficulties of the disease itself. The term Phthisis is derived from the Greek verb θειν, which signifies to wash or consume, and when applied to the pulmonary affections, denotes an ulcerated condition of the lungs. - almost every writer on the subject has considered ulceration as an uniform occurrence, and as an essential ingredient in the definition of the disease. By Galen, the



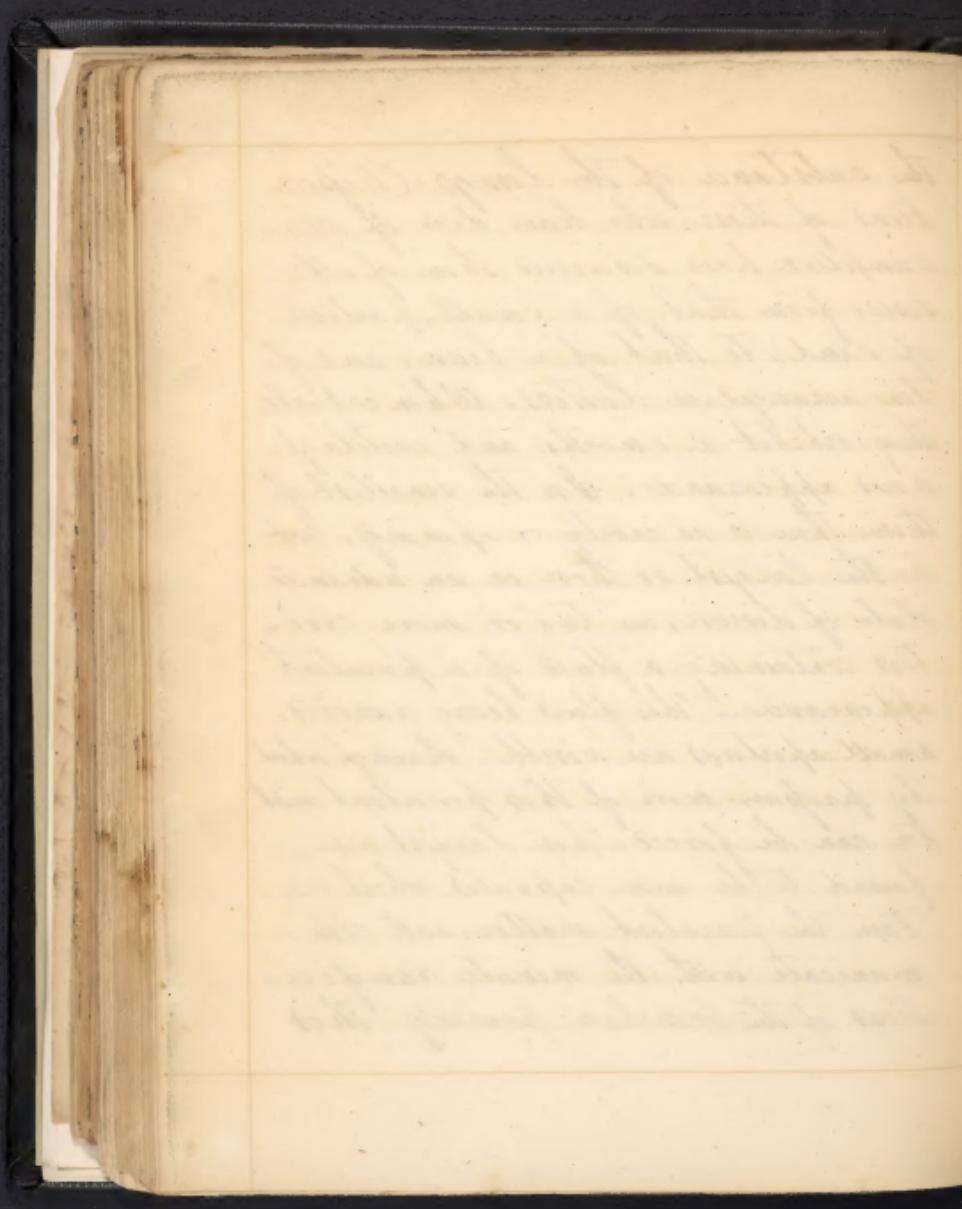
disease is defined to be an expec-  
toration of pus or purulent mat-  
ter from the substance of the lungs  
attended with hectic fever. Here  
it is evident the existence of an ul-  
cer is insinuated. By Byley it is  
said, that every pulmonary affection  
which when left at rest produces  
disorganization of the lungs, followed  
by ulceration, and death, ought to  
be considered as phthisis. I shall  
not attempt a formal criticism upon  
either of these definitions, but can-  
not forbear taking of some exception  
to the latter, in as much as it ex-  
cludes all those diseases where there  
is no actual disorganization, and  
includes all those where there is a  
very organic derangement. I con-  
ceive it extremely difficult if not



totally impossible to define the disease,  
and any one who shall be adventurous  
enough to attempt it will find  
himself much perplexed and embar-  
rassed. Some writers, especially the  
older, had their divisions of this dis-  
ease absurdly numerous. Savage  
had eighteen. To obtain perspicui-  
ty, and for purposes of a practical  
nature, the disease here will be con-  
sidered under a much reduced num-  
ber. I shall first notice tubercular  
consumption, or that form of the  
complaint produced by tubercles. But  
before the symptoms are detailed, a  
few observations will be made on the  
nature and appearance of tubercles,  
their seat, and origin. Tubercles  
are certain small tumors or maf-  
fs of undurated matter found in



the substance of the lungs. Dipec-  
tions of those who have died of con-  
sumption have discovered them of all  
sizes, from that of a small particle  
of sand, to that of a bean, and of-  
ten arranged in clusters. When cut into,  
they exhibit a smooth and cartilagi-  
nous appearance. In the smallest of  
them there is no cavity or opening, but  
in the largest, or those in an advanced  
state of disease, are two or more cavi-  
ties containing a fluid of a purulent  
appearance. This fluid being removed,  
small apertures are visible through which  
by pressure more of this purulent mat-  
ter can be forced. Those largest are  
found to be mere capsules which con-  
tain the purulent matter, and com-  
municate with the minute ramifications  
of the bronchia pouring their



matter into them. Inspecting the na-  
ture and origin of tubercles, no certain  
information has been obtained. Ballon  
supposes them to be indurated glands  
produced by acromony. Some think  
them connected with a shamous dia-  
thesis - and others that they are mere  
depositions of matter from the capillary  
arteries; which are of various kinds  
and consistencies. However formed tuber-  
cles sometimes remain for a long time  
indolent, but at length become inflamed  
and are thereby changed into abscesses  
or sinusses, which breaking give rise  
to a purulent expectoration, and thus  
lay the foundation of Phtisies. not  
infrequently, only one tubercle bursts  
or is ruptured at a time; this then  
heals, producing a remission of the  
symptoms, and the patient recovers



a hope of recovery. But upon the next exposure to the exciting causes two or more tabades go through the same process which has been described. The distressing symptoms are removed, the lungs at least become once more free of disease, hectic supervenes, and the patient rapidly sinks. - The exciting causes of consumption which have been already alluded to are numerous. The following are the most general. Haemoptysis, ill cured pulmonary inflammation, catarrh, asthma, repeated eruptions, frequent and excessive debauchies, playing much on wind instruments, unfavourable states of the weather, especially its vicissitudes from heat to cold, and from dryness to humidity, suppressed haemorrhoidal, catamenial, and other accustomed evacuations, inordinate



play of the passions of the mind, occupations in which the body is kept much inclined forwards, or in those employments in which small particles of matter are constantly inhaled into the lungs. Hosiery, straw cutters, those who dry-ground the pints of needles, and persons superintendents of cotton and flour mills are peculiarly liable to the complaint. —

Tubercular consumption usually comes on with a slight short cough which becomes habitual, is little remarked by those affected, and sometimes even absolutely denied. at the same time the breathing becomes readily fatigued by any bodily exertion, the body grows lean, and the patient becomes languid and indolent. This state of things continues for a year, or even for two years, without any complaint.



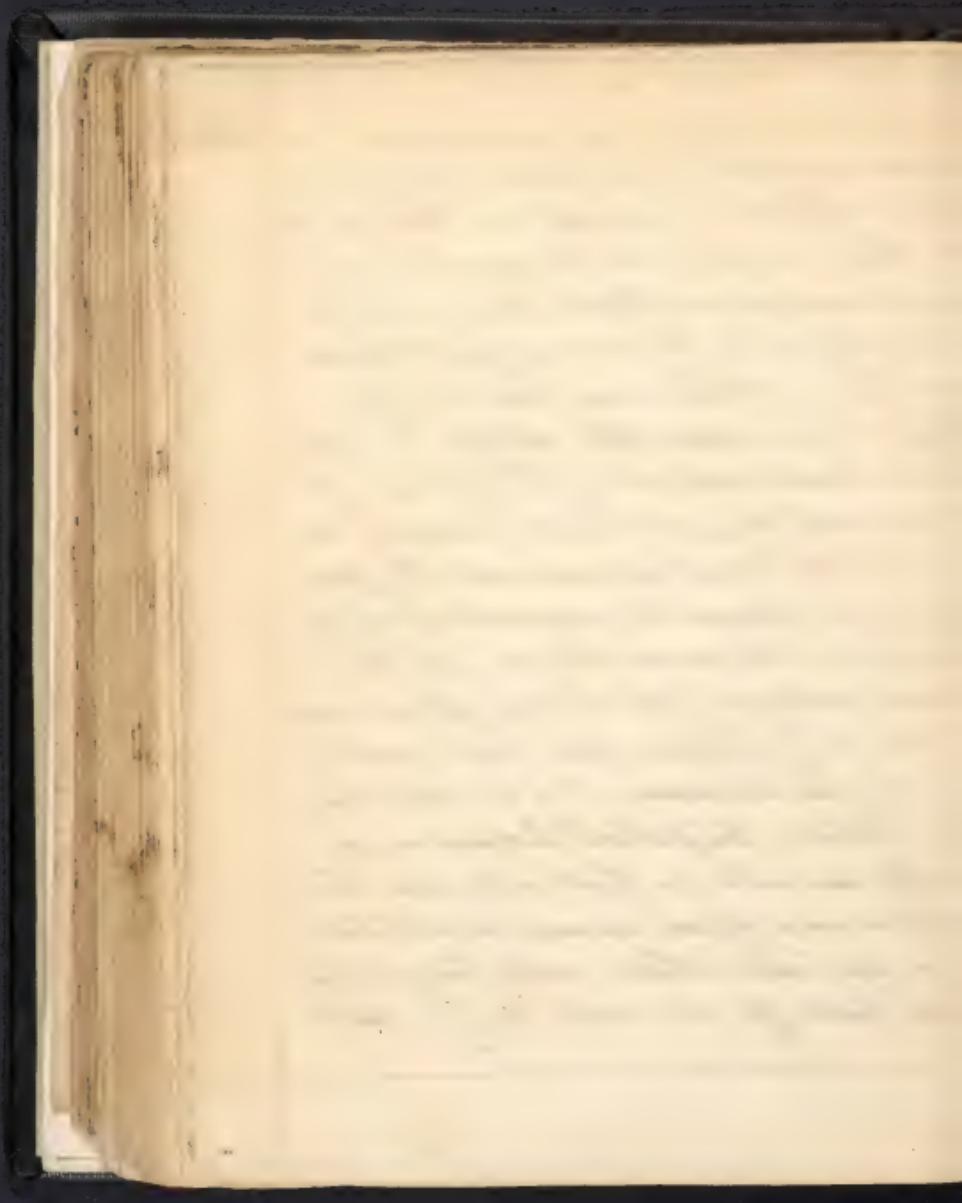
being made, excepting only, that he  
is more easily affected by cold than for-  
merly, which frequently aggravates the  
cough, and produces some catarrh. This  
however is soon relieved, is supposed to  
have arisen from cold alone, excites no  
alarm either in the patient, or his friends,  
nor leads them to take any precau-  
tionary measures. Upon one of those  
occasions of catching cold, the cough  
becomes more considerabk, is particula-  
rly troublesome at night when the pa-  
tient retires to rest, and continues  
longer than is usual in the case of  
a simple catarrh. This now excites  
attention, particularly if it occurs du-  
ring the summer season; the catar-  
rhal symptoms appearing at this  
time show that the disease is more  
fixed. The cough coming on in the man-



not described, is often for a considerable time unattended with any expectoration; but after repeated taking cold, it becomes more constant, is at the same time attended with some expectoration, which is most considerable in the mornings. - The matter of this expectoration becomes by degrees more copious, viscid, and opaque; although of a yellow or greenish colour, and purulent appearance. The whole of the discharge however is not entirely changed in this manner, but which one part of it retains the form of mucus, another suffers the changes described. When the cough increases, and continues frequent through the night, and the matter expectorated undergoes these changes; the breathing becomes more oppressive, and the emaciation increases rapidly. - at the first



commencement of the disease the pulse is often natural, or perhaps is a little quick-er than usual: but the symptoms which have been enumerated seldom subsist long before it becomes frequent, hard, and full. at the same time the face flushes, particularly after eating; the palms of the hands and soles of the feet are affected with burning heat, owing to accubations<sup>to</sup> come obvious, and the fever by degrees assumes the exquisit form of hectic-- The disease seldom runs the course without pain being felt in some part of the thorax, and most usually under the sternum. In the last stage of Hæmorrhage, the patient becomes exceedingly emaciated, so that he presents the appearance of an animated skeleton: his eyes look hollow, and languid, his hair falls off, his nails are of a livid



colour, and much incurvated. To the  
end of the disease the mind is confident  
and full of Hope. - shortly before death  
the extremities become cold, and in some  
instances a delirium precedes that conti-  
nuing until life is extinguished.  
I have now detailed the symptoms of  
tubercular consumption. - It is easily dis-  
tinguished from the other forms of Phthisis,  
by a particular conformation of body,  
diseased by a long neck, high cheek  
bones, prominent shoulders, a long nar-  
row-chest; by fair hair, clear skin,  
delicate rosy complexion, large veins,  
lumid upper lip, weak voice, blue eyes,  
great sensibility, remarkable vivacity  
of mind, and by all those signs in-  
dicating a scrophulous diathesis. -  
The treatment in this disease it is  
very obvious must vary exceedingly



in the different stages of it, and it  
should be carefully modified accordingly.  
The primary object, is to arrest inflam-  
mation of the Tabacles, and for this  
purpose Blood-letting should be reser-  
ved to... This remedy was introduced into  
practice in the early stages of Phthisis  
by the celebrated Donor, who carried it  
to an unwarrantable extent. Bleeding  
his patients in some cases upwards of  
fifty times. Thus by abusing the re-  
medy it was brought into disrepute.  
and a directly opposite, and equally  
pernicious system was substituted.  
Incident in scilicet qui ruit vita-  
re Charybdis. -- To one of our own  
countrymen the credit is indisputably  
due, of reviving the lancet in this dis-  
ease, and of using it with discri-  
tion, and judgment. In this as in



all other cases special regard must be had to the pulse, and other circumstances which lead to a knowledge of the state of the system. The importance of subduing inflammation on the one hand, and the extreme debility of the patient on the other, and the direct tendency of this remedy to increase his debility must be constantly borne in mind. As auxiliary means, topical evacuations by cups and laches, particularly dry cupping should be employed. Dr. Chapman says that when there is not much force in the circulation, or other signs of active inflammation, this mode of extracting blood is preferable even to the lancet itself. Its modus operandi is very intelligible; it invades the circulation from the lungs; thereby relieving the tabors of in-



flammation more effectually, and of course does not so much exhaust the patient. This is the favourite practice of this country, and in attestation of its efficacy, the testimony of the most enlightened physicians could be adduced. The advantage of establishing some certain irritation in this complaint has long been known and appreciated. For this purpose Plasters, sitons, and ointments have been employed. To avail, or in other words to be really useful they should be long continued; for a chronic remedy is necessary to the cure of a chronic disease. Of late it has been much in vogue to substitute the tartar emetic plasters, but it is believed to be recommended by little save its novelty. It is not more advantageous than a perpetual blister, and is certainly more



painful. In the early stages of con-  
sumption medicines have been highly extolled;  
and when judiciously administered relief  
has been certainly afforded. To this point  
the concurrent wisdom of the ablest practi-  
tioners of this country could be had. They  
promote absorption, equalise the circu-  
lation, and the excitability, and add to  
this operate in a manner not to be rea-  
sonably explained. - The articles mostly employ-  
ed are the antimoniated tartarate of potash,  
sulphate of copper, sulphate of zinc, and  
specacuanha. - Much difference of opin-  
ion has existed as to the comparative pow-  
ers of these, some preferring one, and some  
another. The specacuanha is however at  
this time, in this country, the most fas-  
cinating medicine. Which, to be employ-  
ed, in order to prove serviceable, must be  
exhibited daily for two or three weeks.



This frequent repetition initiates the effects of a sea voyage, which has so often been said to be beneficial in pulmonary consumption. By many practitioners, the salve purges are employed in the first, or inflammatory stage of the complaint in order to reduce the force of the circulation, but carried to any extent they are certainly producers of harm, and in every variety of the complaint to be content to keep the bowels in a soluble state will be sufficient. To fulfil their indications, the antimonial articles in minute doses in combination with nitre will answer very well and I am told is much employed in the practice of this city. - In every stage and form of pulmonary consumption mercury was at one time prescribed. It obtained celebrity in this disease from its having cured in the hands of the celebrated Radcliff, King William;



and about the same era was the favourite remedy in pectoral complaints. Dr. Baldwin in his annotations on Ballyer observes: "If we ever saw an instance, wherein real consumption was cur'd, it was by this remedy... Five years ago we employed it successfully in the case of a gentleman who had every threatening symptom of the complaint". But I am persuaded this can was not one of genuine tubercular consumption. It is pernicious in every stage of this complaint: and I believe much of the confidence formerly reposed in it is now flown. Why it should be deleterious in tubercular consumption, considering its utility in scrophula, is not intelligible. Relying on analogy, exactly the reverse would be anticipated. The next remedy which claims attention is the digitalis. But for the progress of medical



opinion relative to the powers of this in  
pulmonary consumption, I beg leave  
to refer to Chapman's Therapeutics. It  
will only be observed here, that in the early  
case in which it can be relied on, viz  
the incipient stage, attended with slight  
haemoptysis, a small, quick interval of pulse,  
impeded respiration, and a short dry cough.  
I have now enumerated the most approved  
remedies in the early or what is thought  
the inflammatory stage of Phthisis. But it  
is a melancholy truth that they are often  
inadequate to the arrest of the disease;  
abscesses form, and hectic fever with its  
frightful train follows. 'tis this sad con-  
dition of things, experience authorizes the  
conclusion, that we can do but little more  
than alleviate the patient's sufferings. This  
indeed constitutes the distinctive character  
of tubercular consumption; which grad-



ually undermines the frail fabric of mortality, and ultimately cuts short the slender thread which supports life. But though beyond rescue from death, the patient should not be abandoned, the resources of medicine afford abundant means of smoothing the approach to the grave, and humanity forbids them to be withheld. The leading indication here, is to abate hectic fever, which would soon destroy if permitted to continue unremitted. It uniformly wears the intermitting type of the ordinary fever of this description, and demands the same remedies viz the peruvian bark, and other vegetable tonics; to which may be added arsenic, certain preparations of stib, lead &c. The succup of some practitioners with the nitric acid in healing ophthalmous ulcers, led them to employ it in a thus stage of consump-



tion. Though of course as I believe it has not acquired any solid reputation. Impelled by the desire of discovering some remedy for this disease Dr. Roberts soon after his arrival instituted a series of experiments with almost every article of the Materia Medica. The result was that vinegar was found to be the most efficacious remedy. Of late the practice has been resorted to in endeavouring to heal the ulcers of the lungs by inhaling the vapour of certain resinous and balsamic substances. The articles recommended are the Terebinthinate preparations, and the balsam of Tola. The vapour of sulphuric ether has been recommended, either alone, or impregnated with the leaves of hemlock. This is a valuable remedy; as it relieves the cough, dyspnoea, and oppression. - On principles nearly allied, the inhalation of atmospheric air. Various



by dilated and combined with certain gas-  
ses has been proposed. To experiment exten-  
sively with the remedy Dr. Beddoe  
established what he termed the pneumatic  
inhalation. It was proposed by him to in-  
hale the carbonic acid gas, under an im-  
pression that it would correct the foul  
ulcers, and dispose them to take on the  
healing process. But however plausible  
in theory, when tested by actual practice,  
the remedy proved unavailing. Various  
other projects have been proposed for the  
cure of consumption, such as confining  
patients day and night with cows, in  
order to inhale their vapour, inhaling  
them as it were, &c. The efficacy of the  
first of these remedies is believed to be ex-  
tremely problematical, and the latter ab-  
solutely deleterious. - As the disease ad-  
vances affections arise of so urgent a



nature as to demand particular attention.  
of these one of the most troublesome are  
night sweats, which arise from debility of  
the exhalents and can be most effectually  
checked by applications made to the part  
affected. By slapping in warm flannel  
and rubbing the surface with stimulating  
applications, such as salt, or brandy, much  
advantage is derived. The most effectual  
of the internal remedies, are the mineral  
acids, especially the sulphuric, given alone,  
or in combination with some of the vegetable  
bitters. Sagger of lead, arsenic, and alum  
have also been recommended. Low water  
taken freely is often very beneficial. Another  
of these distressing affections is diarrhea.  
This may be combated precisely by the  
same remedies which are given in other  
forms of the complaint. Very minute  
doses of mercury have been known



to check it when every thing else had failed. at this stage of the disease the cough which throughout is uniformly troub-  
lous, becomes exceedingly aggravated, and  
solicits relief. Now most of the cough  
mixtures, and especially the preparation  
of gum ammonica and nitric are useful.  
The balsamic articles are also here useful.  
an article vended under the title of the  
balsam of honey is an admirably rem-  
edy in the last stages of Phthisis. It is  
composed principally of the balsam of bals-  
so mingled with other articles as to ren-  
der it much more agreeable than his sim-  
ple undisguised medicin. Out of all rem-  
edies, opium though it never cures affords  
the greatest amount of benefit. It re-  
lieves the cough, moderates diarrhea, al-  
leviates pain, and upholds for a time  
the sinking strength. When all other



means have been ultimately abandoned,  
and hope itself, which lingers in this disease  
with surprising obstinacy is ready  
to take its flight, opium, by its pow-  
ers divests even death of its horrors, and  
proves most emphatically, the magnam  
dei donum. - I have hitherto said no-  
thing of the preventive measures in this dis-  
ease. A few remarks therefore relate to  
to the proper plan to be pursued here soon  
to be required. By the common consent of  
practitioners the first step in this prophyl-  
actic course, is to remove the patient  
from the humid, bleak, and changeable at-  
mosphere of northern, and middle latitudes,  
to healthy situations near the sea. -  
as relates to this country the interior of  
Georgia or New Orleans are perhaps the  
most eligible situations. As a part of  
the above plan, exercise is highly appro-



ciated, particularly on horseback. But it must be regulated by discrimination and judgment. - Employed when much inflammatory diathesis prevails, it will not fail to prove disserviceable. The patient should also <sup>be</sup> protected from entering out marshy condition of the atmosphere. Little advantage however will be gained unless strict attention is paid to regimen! That food should be selected which is light, and easy of digestion, with the least stimulating properties. - Milk mixed with some one of the farinaceous articles will constitute the best diet. To conclude what I have to say of the prophylactic measures, it will only be added that all the exciting causes should be studiously avoided, particularly cold; which may be guarded against by wearing flannel next the skin.



at all seasons. When this essay was  
commenced it was intended to treat the  
other forms of consumption; but as  
my time is limited, and as most of the  
remedies which have been recommended  
are also applicable to them last, I hope  
I shall be excused for having omitted  
to do so. -



